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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/17/2018

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SUBJECT: MINURCAT/EUFOR: EARLY UK VIEWS ON THE MANDATE

¶1. (SBU/NF) Foreign Office contacts have informally told us that the UK continues to question the need for a United Nations peacekeeping presence in the Central Africa Republic (CAR) and plans to advocate for the smallest force possible in the extension of the MINURCAT mandate, even as the UN force takes on EUFOR's responsibilities. The FCO has not received any clear indications on French thinking about the mandate, but understands that the French may agree to extend the EUFOR mandate for a few months beyond the March 15 cut-off (until the UN force is in place) but that France wants to be out of the UN force as soon as possible. Additionally, HMG thinks that France is supportive of maintaining a PKO presence in CAR, contrary to the British position.

¶2. (SBU/NF) While HMG does not see a compelling reason for the PKO to continue in CAR, it is fully supportive of its role in Chad. Under its "evidence-based approach to peacekeeping," HMG wants the MINURCAT renewal to have a clear mandate, including an exit strategy based on long-term planning. The UK would like to see a greater emphasis on rule of law and less rebel chasing. The main problem at present is banditry, and the UN operation should focus on establishing systems that bring the bandits to justice. HMG welcomes greater P-3 coordination in the run-up to the MINURCAT mandate renewal.

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